



UNITED STATES SENATOR · MICHIGAN  
**DEBBIE STABENOW**  
PRESS RELEASE



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## **Senate Takes Important Steps to Lower Prescription Drug Prices -- But More Needs to Be Done**

WASHINGTON— Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., said today's Senate passage of a major drug bill, which includes legislative language she authored to allow the re-importation of prescription drugs from Canada and to allow states to extend Medicaid discounts to the uninsured, is an important first step toward making prescription drugs affordable for all American consumers.

Stabenow, who has spearheaded a Senate effort this year both to lower prescription drug prices and to provide prescription drug coverage under Medicare, also acknowledged that today's Senate action marked a temporary setback for the second goal.

"I am pleased at the progress we have made in changing the way prescription drugs are marketed and sold, but I am extremely disappointed in today's vote on a Medicare prescription drug benefit," Stabenow said, "I pledge to continue our fight against high drug prices and to provide prescription drug coverage under Medicare."

A key element of "The Greater Access to Affordable Pharmaceuticals Act," approved in the Senate by a 78-21 vote, is language that will streamline the process of bringing generic drugs to market – language that will save money for both consumers and taxpayers.

"The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that this bill can cut consumer drug prices by about \$60 billion over the next 10 years," Stabenow said.

The bill also contains an amendment co-authored by Stabenow, which would, among other provisions, allow U.S.-licensed pharmacists and drug wholesalers to import FDA-approved prescription drugs from Canada.

Another victory against high drug prices came in July, with the passage of a bill authored by Stabenow that reaffirms the right of states to extend Medicaid discounts for prescription drugs to middle-class residents who do not have prescription drug coverage. "The passage of my Rx Flexibility for States Act was a victory for states trying to provide their citizens with low-cost prescription drugs," Stabenow said.

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Stabenow said the Senate has accomplished a great deal in the face of opposition by the pharmaceutical lobby, which she termed the strongest industry lobby in Washington, but she remained committed to the goal of making prescription drugs benefits part of Medicare.

“Medicare has been a great American success story since its passage in 1965, but our delivery of medicine has evolved tremendously since then, with increasing focus on the use of prescription drugs to keep our senior citizens active and independent, ” Stabenow said. “The Senate had a chance today to write a new chapter in the Medicare success story, but, unfortunately, our efforts were blocked by the drug lobby.”

“Since taking on the job of heading the Senate Prescription Drug Task Force, I have met with hundreds of senior citizens at dozens of events, traveled with seniors to Canada to watch them buy drugs at reduced prices, and listened to medical professionals describe how prescription drugs have become a mainstay of preventive medicine,” Stabenow said.

“I have also heard from seniors who have paid the price – literally – for these life-sustaining prescription drugs by sacrificing their own quality of life. Over the past several weeks, I have shared many stories of seniors who faced daily choices between prescription drugs and food, between prescription drugs and utility payments, prescription drugs and home maintenance.

“We know we have very powerful opponents,” she said, “but I can promise everyone that I’m going to keep working on this issue we complete the job. With the continued help of individual seniors, senior groups and others concerned about this issue, we will get it done.”